

THE LOGIC OF METAMEDIA

THE TRAGEDY OF CLOSED MEDIA.

Closed media, unusable together, unable to quote from or link to one another, are creating a Balkanized world of electronic media. Whereas what we need is *on-line media with compatible connections*-- for scholarship, controversy, anthologizing, understanding, the reworking of ideas, and freedom.

THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WE NEED--

A Point-and-click universe. We want to be able to jump from document to document, like a squirrel from branch to branch, passing through one document on the way to another, purchasing just that moment's portion.

Networked interwoven documents. We need to be able to treat the network as a seamless whole, and the contents as a unified docuverse.

Royalty. Owners need to be paid. Copyright is not an imposition; it is the compromise under which things are made available. The new system must extend it inconspicuously and innocuously.

Open hypermedia publishing. Everyone must be free and equal to publish, to comment, to publish links, to quote. Quotation can work within the copyright system, by purchasing the quotation from the document of origin.

Compatibility. Enough of this hardware incompatibility hogwash! We need compatible *data*, to which the hardware is a window.

Connectedness. Any document must be able to connect to any other.

Stability. We need to know the material will be addressable in the same form and the same way, decades from now.

A Populist System. This cannot just be for the wireheads, early adopters, elite; it must be accessible to all.

THEREFORE WE START OUR OWN UNIVERSE.

CONCLUSION: THESE PREMISES LEAD TO A NEW PLAYING FIELD:

Open-ended technology, capped by trademark: a variety of database methods can implement this publishing model, in a mix of assured upward compatibility.

Defined by contract. Participants agree to unusual terms of sale, etc. No rights are relinquished by participants *except within this closed system*.

Promise of stability. Publisher and vendor agree to keep material in the repository.

Minute sale. Sale is interactive and on request, with royalty even on tiny portions.

Clean royalty. Proportional on every piece bought by user.

Arbitrary links. Any type of connection, from an expansible list of link types.

Quotation. Transclusion, or virtual instance pointer, says "buy from there."

TECHNICALITIES--

Harpoon table. Inbound links and transclusion pointers are stored also with the destination document; this storage is paid for by those who point.

Local caching of transclusions. Quoted material may be stored with a new document, still owned by original publisher, but storage paid for by new publisher.